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Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization
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Draft report

Rapporteur: Sebastian **Rogač** (Croatia)

V. Working methods of the Special Committee and identification of new subjects

A. Working methods of the Special Committee

1. The issue of the working methods of the Special Committee was addressed by several delegations during the general exchange of views held at the 276th and 277th meetings of the Special Committee, on 17 and 18 February 2015, and was considered at the 3rd meeting of the Working Group of the Whole.

2. Several delegations stressed that there was a need to reinvigorate the work of the Special Committee, especially in the light of the seventieth anniversary of the Charter. The potential of the Special Committee to assist in the revitalization of the Organization was also noted.

3. Several delegations continued to urge the Special Committee to consider, on a priority basis, ways and means of improving its working methods and enhancing its efficiency, and to fully implement the decision on working methods adopted in 2006, as reflected in paragraph 3 (e) of General Assembly resolution 69/122. Several delegations emphasized that there was a need for States to review all existing agenda items, looking into the usefulness of further discussing them, and taking into account their continued relevance and the likelihood of reaching a consensus in the future before considering new items.

4. Some delegations reiterated that the work of the Special Committee should be reviewed to ensure that the overlap between organs considering the same or similar issues was eliminated and that items that had been considered elsewhere were not duplicated by the Special Committee. Several delegations reaffirmed that the Special Committee should examine the frequency and duration of its meetings, perhaps by meeting every two years or shortening its sessions. Some delegations

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expressed the view that the Special Committee should discuss how to use its time and resources most efficiently.

5. Some delegations spoke against any proposal to shorten the duration of the sessions or not to convene the Special Committee annually. It was also pointed out that there should be greater possibilities for substantive and constructive debates on existing and new proposals. It was suggested that the Bureau of the Special Committee should be appointed three months before its session so as to allow for sufficient planning and preparation, including the advance circulation of documents.

6. Stress was laid on the significant potential of the Special Committee, as highlighted by the landmark instruments that it had produced, including the Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes. Several delegations reemphasized that the full execution of the mandate of the Special Committee depended on the political will of States and on the full implementation and optimization of the methods of work of the Special Committee, including the configuration of a solid thematic agenda that would allow for the optimal use of resources. It was also suggested that some States were blocking the consideration of proposals before the Special Committee without presenting any substantive arguments as to their reasoning.

7. Several delegations placed special emphasis on continuing to consider items and proposals regarding the question of the maintenance of international peace and security, in particular those addressing the functions of the General Assembly. It was also observed by several delegations that the Special Committee was the appropriate forum for the consideration of reform proposals that would enhance the effectiveness of the Organization.

B. Identification of new subjects

8. The issue of the identification of new subjects was considered during the general exchange of views held at the 276th and 277th meetings of the Special Committee, on 17 and 18 February 2015, and at the 3rd meeting of the Working Group of the Whole.

9. A number of delegations recalled the new subjects proposed at previous sessions of the Special Committee and called for their meaningful consideration. Several delegations stated that the Special Committee could contribute to the examination of legal matters relating to the reform and revitalization of the Organization and its organs, including issues surrounding the roles and prerogatives of the General Assembly and the Security Council. The view was also expressed that the consideration by the Special Committee of new proposals relating to the maintenance of international peace and security would contribute to the strengthening of the role of the Organization.

10. The view was presented that the Special Committee should consider no new proposals that might entail amendments to the Charter without the express mandate of the General Assembly; such proposals might be considered only in the overall context of United Nations reform and with caution. It was suggested that the Special Committee should be cautious about adding new subjects to its work programme and that any new subjects should be practical and non-political.

11. At the 3rd meeting of the Working Group of the Whole, the representative of Ghana introduced a proposal entitled "Concept paper by Ghana on strengthening the relationship and cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations or arrangements in the peaceful settlement of disputes" (A/AC.182/L.137), pointing out that it took into account the important role played by regional organizations in the attainment of the overall objectives of the United Nations. It was highlighted that the proposal was aimed at filling any gaps that existed between the United Nations and regional organizations with regard to the coordination of their activities, for example in such areas as regional security, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding. It was requested that the proposal should be considered under "Maintenance of international peace and security" rather than under "Identification of new subjects".

12. Several delegations voiced support for the proposal, with some expressing the view that it would be more appropriate to consider the proposal under "Peaceful settlement of disputes". The view was expressed by some delegations that further examination of the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations in the context of the peaceful settlement of disputes would be fruitful, the previous General Assembly resolutions on the matter notwithstanding. The importance of such regional organizations acting in conformity with the Charter when contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security was stressed. It was also suggested that the use of the terms "regional organizations" and "regional agencies or arrangements" should be harmonized so as to better reflect the language used in the Charter.

13. Other delegations stressed the importance of identifying gaps and avoiding duplication with discussions pertaining to the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations being held in other forums of the Organization. It was also suggested that reference should be made in the proposal to Security Council statements and other documents regarding regional cooperation.

14. It was suggested that the proposal should be improved by formulating specific recommendations on the subject matter, making it more action-oriented and clarifying its objectives.

15. The sponsor delegation expressed its readiness to accommodate the constructive comments made and to conduct informal consultations on the issue.